

Brookfield Kindergarten
3601 Forest Avenue
Brookfield
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1087

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
801 - 19th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.

BROOKFIELD KINDERGARTEN

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Location: 3601 Forest Avenue, Cook County, Brookfield, Illinois.

Present Owner: The structure is now owned and occupied by William Miller.

Present Use: Family dwelling.

Statement of Significance: The structure was built as a private kindergarten for Queene F. Coonley, a pioneer in the kindergarten movement in Chicago. It is considered one of William Drummond's finest designs.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of property: Lot 6, Block 1 and Lot 1, Block 16, including vacated street between, of Grossdale, a subdivision of the southeast quarter of section 34-39-12.

The following is based on the complete chain of title contained in Book 40E, pp. 170. In the Cook County Recorder's Office, Chicago, Illinois.

Queene F. Coonley acquired title to the property on August 11, 1910 from Paul F. Swan (Document 4019758). The Board of Education acquired title to the property on September 27, 1929 from Mrs. Coonley (Document 10502259). O. J. Nichols acquired property on June 21, 1945 from Board of Education (Document 14582522). William Miller acquired property on September 21, 1963 from O. J. Nichols (Document 18635506).

2. Date of erection: 1911.
3. Architect: William E. Drummond. William E. Drummond was born March 28, 1876, in Newark, New Jersey, where his father worked as a carpenter-contractor. Attracted by better business possibilities in the Midwest, Drummond's father moved to Chicago. In the mid-eighties, he brought his family west and settled them in the Chicago suburb of Austin where William Drummond attended the public schools.

After high school Drummond entered the University of Illinois Academy, a preparatory school, where he spent the years 1896-1897. From 1897-1898, he attended the University of Illinois School of Architecture where he probably met his contemporary, Walter Burley Griffin (b. 1876), who was also studying there.

HABS
ILL,
16-BROOK,
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Drummond entered "The Studio" of Frank Lloyd Wright in the early years of the twentieth century and remained there until the office was closed after Wright's flight to Europe in 1909. [The above information was obtained through interviews with Francis (Barry) Byrne (February 22, 1956), Mrs. Josephine Drummond Jackson (February 25, 1957), Frank Lloyd Wright (October 22, 1955), and from correspondence with William M. Drummond (March 15, 1956), and the University of Illinois Alumni Association (March 9, 1957).]

4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The T-shaped building, now subdivided for residential use (this was done by O. J. Nichols), originally had an open interior with a high ceiling in the east-west axis, and lower ceilings in the wings which project to the north and the south at the rear of the structure. There was originally a projection booth above the entry at the west end of the main central axis.

For photographs of the building as originally built see "The Work of Guenzel and Drummond," Western Architect (February, 1915), which is devoted to the work of Guenzel and Drummond (a partnership in existence at the time of the article). All buildings in the article are attributed to the firm, however, a number are works of Drummond prior to formation of this partnership. The Brookfield Kindergarten was undoubtedly designed by Drummond, but whether just prior to, or immediately following, the formation of the firm, is undetermined since the exact date of this formation has not been located.

5. Alterations and additions: After O. J. Nichols purchased the building in 1945, he added a two-car garage at the basement level to the southeast corner of the house (east of the south wing of the building and south of the projecting rear terrace). The grade level to the north of the projecting terrace was raised to the level of the main floor of the building. The interior was subdivided to provide baths and sleeping rooms commensurate with the use of the structure as a residence. Stairs were added and the projection booth enclosed as a bedroom. A door was added just to the east of the main entry door on the south side of the central unit. Wing walls with planters which

projected to the north and the south at the west end of the central unit were removed. (See architectural description.)

HABS
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B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The original owner, Queene F. Coonley, who commissioned the design from Drummond, was a native of Detroit. She moved to the Chicago area upon her marriage in 1901 to Avery Coonley, manufacturer and real estate developer. They lived in Riverside in the large estate designed for them by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1909.

Mrs. Coonley was active in the private kindergarten movement in the area during the early decades of the twentieth century. In addition to the Brookfield Kindergarten, she commissioned the "Coonley Playhouse" by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1912 [see Henry Russell Hitchcock, In the Nature of Materials (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941)], and a structure near the Wright-designed estate in Riverside known as "Thorncroft" which served as a housing facility for the teachers in the kindergarten [see "The Work of Guenzel and Drummond," Western Architect (February, 1915)].

After its acquisition by the Board of Education in 1929, the school was used as a public kindergarten.

C. Sources of Information:

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School, The Midwest Spirit in Residential Architecture, 1893-1916. Evanston, Illinois: unpublished doctoral dissertation for the Department of Art, Northwestern University, June 1957.

Hasbrouck, Wilbert R. "The Architectural Firm of Guenzel and Drummond," The Prairie School Review. Vol. 1, No. 2.

Manson, Grant Carpenter. Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1958.

Brief references to Drummond's work in Wright's studio.

"The Work of Guenzel and Drummond," Western Architect. (February, 1915).

Wight, Peter B. "Country House Architecture in the Middlewest," Architectural Record. Vol. XL (October, 1916). p. 291.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

HABS
ILL,
16-BROOK

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This small structure was designed by William Drummond, an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright, and is considered one of his best designs. It represents an early application of the Sullivan-Wright principles of architecture to the private school building.
2. Condition of fabric: Good (extensively remodeled on the interior).

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 50' x 61', T-shaped, one story.
2. Wall construction, finish and color: White stucco with brown wood trim.
3. Structural system, framing: Wooden balloon frame.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: An open terrace surrounded by 2'-6" stucco walls forms an extension of the east-west axis on the east (rear) of the house. Originally two sets of stairs descended to grade level at the north and south corners of the east side of the terrace. Because of a change in the grade of the lawn, only the south stairs are now used.
5. Chimneys: The central chimney at the rear of the building on the central axis of symmetry is made of brick covered with stucco.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doors on the north and south sides of the bay which projects at the west end of the east-west axis were the original main entrance doors. These doors were originally single, large glass panels with muntins forming a triangular design to match the windows. They have been replaced by two panel doors. A door has been added, replacing a window, just to the east of the main entrance on the south side of the house. Doors similar to the main entrance doors originally flanked the fireplace and opened onto the rear terrace. They have been replaced by flush panel doors.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Intersecting gabled roofs (approximately 25° pitch) with flat, widely overhanging eaves. The pitched portions of the roof are covered with asphalt shingles, and the flat portions with built-up roof.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Built-up wooden fascia slopes inward from top to bottom at a 95° angle. The soffits are stuccoed.

HABS
ILL,
16-BROOK
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C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement is used for storage. A two-car garage has been added to the southeast corner of the building at the basement level. There is a sun deck above it.
 - b. First floor: Originally one large room with a high central ceiling and lower ceilings in the north and south wings. There was a projection booth above the projecting bay at the west end of the building. The building is now used as a family dwelling. The north wing is the master bedroom; the south wing is the dining room. There is a central hall bisecting the main axis with a bedroom and bath on the north and a kitchen on the south. The living room lies at the east end of the main axis and a family room, kitchenette, bath, and storage at the west end. The original projection booth has been enclosed for a bedroom.
- 2. Stairways: A new stair has been added in hall way running up to bedroom (old projection booth) and down to basement.
 - 3. Flooring: Carpet in living room and dining room with asphalt tile in bedrooms, kitchen, family room and baths.
 - 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Originally all surfaces were painted plaster. The ceiling of the east-west axis has been covered with acoustical fiber-board.
 - 5. Doorways and doors: All interior doors were added when the building was converted to a residence. They are flush panel.
 - 6. Decorative features and trim: Wood stripping decoration in fireplace.
 - 7. Lighting fixtures: The electrical fixtures are not contemporary with the structure.

8. Heating: Central heat. There is a roman brick fireplace on the east wall of the house on the axis of symmetry. Two tall strip windows with limestone lintel and sills pierce the fireplace mass above the opening. The hearth is roman brick.

HABS
ILL,
16-BROOK
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D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: The structure faces west on Forest Avenue in a residential neighborhood. A small stream forms the eastern boundary of the property.
2. Landscaping, walks: Two parallel walks run east from the sidewalk, turn at right angles, and approach the main entrances. The original wing walls along the north-south portion of these walks have been removed.

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1965

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The records and measured drawings of this structure were made during the 1965 Chicago Ill Project. This was the third in a series of four summer projects designed to record the significant architecture of the Chicago area. Special attention was given to the Chicago and Prairie Schools of Architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The project was sponsored by Mr. Earl A. Reed, FAIA. He was assisted by a Finance committee composed of John Fugard, FAIA; William E. Hartmann, FAIA; Alfred Shaw, FAIA; and a Selection committee consisting of James Arkin, AIA; Ruth Schoneman, Art Institute of Chicago; and J. Carson Webster, Northwestern University. Organizations cooperating with HABS in this project were the City of Chicago, the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and its Foundation, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Garrick Salvage Fund, and the Women's Architectural League of Chicago. The University of Illinois provided office space.

Professor J. William Rudd, then of the University of Cincinnati, served as the project supervisor. Other members of the summer team were assistant supervisor and Historian, Larry Homolka, Harvard University; photographers, Harold Allen and Richard Nickel; secretary, Mrs. Bert P. Schloss, and student architects, Gary Burk, Texas Technological College; Charles Gregersen, Illinois Institute of Technology; Edward Popko, University of Florida; and Thomas Ross, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Photographic work was done by Richard Nickel in 1967.